

TRAINING MATTERS

Dog training that makes sense - for
both you **AND** your dog

Trainer Tenille Williams

Training Matters
Second Edition 2015
All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2015 by Dog Matters

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or by any information storage and retrieval system without permission in writing from the author.

When working with dogs there is always inherent risk. Dog Matters is not responsible for damages to any persons, animals or property by those attempting these procedures.

For more information contact:

Dog Matters

dogmatters.com



Table of Contents

TRAINING MATTERS	4
EQUIPMENT AND TREATS	4
SORT OUT THE DIET FIRST	5
THE SECRET OF DOG TRAINING	5
HOW DOGS LEARN	6
LURING, CAPTURING & GUIDING	11
WHAT IS A REWARD?	11
ON FOOD	12
THE JACKPOT	13
FADING THE LURE	13
PHASING OUT THE REWARD	13
WHEN TO ADD THE COMMAND / CUE	14
THE RELEASE WORD	15
THE STAGES OF LEARNING	16
EXTINCTION BURSTS	17
TIMING OF PUNISHMENT AND REWARD	18
TRAINING POINTS TO REMEMBER	19
OBEDIENCE SKILLS	21
TEACHING FOCUS	21
THE SIT	22
THE DROP	24
THE STAND	26
THE RECALL	27
THE STAY	28
LOOSE LEASH WALKING	31
THE HEEL	34
USING A LONG LINE	35
EVERYDAY LIFE SKILLS	36
ANTHROPOMORPHISM - HUMANISING DOGS	36
DOGS DON'T FEEL GUILTY	36
NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE	37
CAN I ALLOW MY DOGS ON THE BED?	39
CRATE TRAINING	39
SETTLE	41
GO TO YOUR MAT / PLACE	42
LEAVE IT	43
TARGET TRAINING	44
MENTAL STIMULATION	45
SOCIALISATION AND CONFIDENCE	47
CALMING SIGNALS - WHAT IS YOUR DOG TRYING TO TELL YOU?	48
COMMON BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS	50
ATTENTION SEEKING	50
DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR	51
DIGGING	52

EXCESSIVE BARKING	53
FEAR OF RIDING IN CARS	55
TOILET TRAINING	56
JUMPING UP	57
MOUTHING AND BITING	59
WHINING AND CRYING	61
KEEP TRAINING	62
NOTES	63

TRAINING MATTERS

This booklet is designed to give you the tools you need to help your dog through life in the human world. The information is best used as a supplement to a professional training program. The information found here is an invaluable resource to responsible dog guardians who wish to understand their dog's psychology and improve their relationship with them. In the interest of simplicity, dogs are referred to as 'he.'

EQUIPMENT AND TREATS

Here's what you'll need to follow along with the training methods in this book:

A flat collar – I recommend that you use a strong buckle collar

A martingale collar – Also known as a half-check collar, these are usually part nylon and part chain. I don't recommend the all nylon type. This is the main type of training collar I use in training sessions

A strong leash – Your lead should be at least four feet long (about 1.2 meters) and should be made from nylon, leather or a synthetic leather material such as biothane (this is what I use). Brass clips are recommended for strength. Usually when a cheap lead breaks, it breaks at the clip.

A 10m long line – This will be used to teach recalls and long distance stay work. Again, get a strong quality long line but as light as possible because this is your step between on lead and off lead work

Treat Bag – Timing is so important so when you're training you want to have your treats on you in a treat bag. Bags designed specially for dog training work the best

Treats – Something soft and meaty works best and of course the healthier the better. The dog only needs a tiny piece each time so keep the treats small – about a 1cm cube size for a large dog. Suggestions: chopped up hotdog, chopped up luncheon meat, leftover meats, chicken or chopped up dog food rolls.

SORT OUT THE DIET FIRST

Just like people, dogs are affected by what they eat, especially in the behavior department. The first thing you want to do is make sure your dog is getting the most natural and healthy diet possible.

I am a fan of raw natural diets. I recommend you do your own research to decide on the best diet for your dog that is also attainable for you. For more information about a raw diet and its benefits, read my blog post [here](#).

THE SECRET OF DOG TRAINING

When it boils down to it, dog training in theory can be very simple. There are no real secrets. Problems arise and things become more complex because each dog is an individual and therefore can throw unexpected curve balls our way. At the end of the day, every dog, and in fact, every animal, will repeat a behavior if it resulted in a pleasant outcome, and avoid repeating the behavior if it resulted in an unpleasant outcome. Challenges sometimes arise when we can't pinpoint what that individual dog finds pleasant or unpleasant, for example, when we have a dog that doesn't seem interested in working for food rewards and we have to come up with something else to motivate that dog.

HOW DOGS LEARN

Dogs learn by association. They learn that their behavior has a consequence. Whether that consequence is pleasant or unpleasant to them will determine whether the dog will repeat the behavior. Notice that what is pleasant or unpleasant depends on the individual dog. You may think that you are rewarding a behavior by giving the dog a treat, however, the treat will only work as a reward if *the dog* likes it. Similarly, you may believe you are punishing the dog by yelling at him for barking, when in reality the dog wanted your attention and has received it, and so does not view the yelling as a punishment. He may see it as a reward!

So, if the dog sits and is given a piece of steak, the dog is highly likely to sit again (as long as the dog finds the steak *pleasant*). However if the dog sits and a loud scary noise occurs, the dog is less likely to sit again (as long as the dog finds the loud noise *unpleasant*).

When used in training, this process is technically called operant conditioning. Now the next section will include some sciency talk but it's worth having an understanding of this for your training.

The Four Quadrants of Operant Conditioning

In this explanation positive and negative are not used in their popular sense of good and bad. Instead they are used in a mathematical sense.

Positive means to add something and **negative** means to take something away.

Reinforcement means to strengthen behavior to make it more likely to occur again.

Punishment means to weaken behavior to make it less likely to occur again.

Positive reinforcement – *To add something to increase a behavior.* Occurs when a behavior is followed by something appetitive or rewarding to the dog that makes that behavior more likely to occur again. *Example – The dog sits, the dog is given a treat he really likes.*

Negative reinforcement – *To take away something to increase a behavior.* Occurs when a behavior is followed by the removal of something that is unpleasant to the dog and therefore makes the behavior more likely to occur again. *Example – The leash applies constant pressure to the dog's collar until he sits, and then the pressure is released. The dog learns to turn off the pressure by sitting.*

Positive punishment – *To add something to decrease a behavior.* Occurs when a behavior is followed by something unpleasant to the dog, making the behavior less likely to occur again. *Example – The dog pulls on the lead, the dog receives a leash correction.*

Negative punishment – *To take something away to decrease a behavior.* Occurs when a behavior is followed by the removal or withholding of something that the dog wants, making the behavior less likely to occur again. *Example – The dog does not sit when told, and therefore the dog's treat is withheld.*

A lot of training can be successful using only positive reinforcement and negative punishment. The other quadrants also have their place. It is impossible to train a dog without any punishment at all – as soon as you put the lead on your dog you have taken away something the dog wants – freedom! That's negative punishment in action.

Even if you don't want to use all four of these quadrants, it's important as a trainer to have knowledge of all four and how and why they work.

A balanced view is very important when it comes to training. This is because all dogs are different, just as all people are different.

Classical Conditioning

Classical conditioning is a process of learning by association. It's also known as Pavlovian conditioning because a Russian scientist named Pavlov discovered the concept. Pavlov found that the presentation of food made the dog produce saliva. He began to ring a bell before the food was presented to the dog. In a short amount of time, the dog produced saliva when he heard the bell; the presence of food was no longer necessary. This is important because we can use sounds as predictors or markers to train dogs.

MARKER TRAINING

Marker training is a fun way to teach your dog obedience commands and tricks or to solve problem behaviors. A clicker is a marker sound. You can also use your voice as a marker sound with a marker word such as “Yes!” which is what we will use as a marker from here on. It's up to you whether you use a clicker or a verbal marker sound but whatever you choose must be short, sharp and sound the same each time. You can also switch between the two depending on what you are working on, which is what I do. My dogs know both marker sounds and I will choose which one to use depending on the exercise. I usually choose to use the word yes when doing obedience training and only use a clicker when training a more complex task, as I find it can be slightly more precise and clear to the dog.

What is a clicker?

A clicker is a small plastic box with a metal tab that you press. Some have a button to press and the metal tab is inside. When you press it, it makes a short, sharp click. This click is then used by the trainer to mark the desired behavior.

How does marker training work?

The dog needs to learn that the marker sound signals that a treat is coming. To start with, you need to condition your dog to the marker sound. This means teaching your dog that every “yes,” means that he will get a tasty treat.

Some trainers “charge the marker,” which means that they just repeat the word yes and follow it with a treat over and over until the dog understands that yes = treat.

If you want to charge your marker sound, wait until your dog is minding his own business and not doing anything in particular and say, “yes,” then immediately give him a treat (within one second). Wait until he is looking away again and say yes and treat again. Repeat this randomly a few times a day until your dog responds to the word yes by swinging his head towards you in expectation of his treat.

You could also skip this step and condition the dog to the clicker as you train.

Once your dog knows that yes=treat, you can use the word yes as a marker to mark the correct or desired behavior. For example, when teaching the sit, you would mark (say yes) and treat the moment your dog’s rear end touches the ground.

Clicker vs. Verbal Marker

The advantage of using a clicker is that it sounds the same every time and is very precise. Because it always sounds the same, it is easier for several family members to use it as a marker and have it sound the same each time. A clicker is also more precise than a spoken word and captures the right moment at just the right time! Some people find that their timing is better when pressing a clicker button, while other people find that holding the clicker as well as the leash and treats is a bit too complicated.

The advantage of a verbal marker is, you always have it with you, and it sounds unique to everyone else's voice around you in a training class. It's personal preference which one you like to use. And as mentioned, you don't have to hold and carry around an extra item while training. I have found that it's a good idea to condition the dog to both a clicker and a verbal marker.

Why do I need a marker as well as a treat?

Without a marker, it is harder for the dog to understand exactly what he did correctly. If you just give a treat without a marker, it takes several seconds for the treat to reach the dog and reward him. That may not seem like much, but several behaviors can happen in this timeframe and your dog won't know which one he is being rewarded for. You could even be rewarding him for something you don't want him to do!

Research has found that for the dog to make a really strong connection between the correct behavior and receiving the treat, he needs to get the treat within half second if you're not using a marker sound. That's not much time! I don't know about you but I am not that fast. A marker sounds bridges the gap between behavior and reward, and buys us time to get the treat to the dog's mouth.

LURING, CAPTURING & GUIDING

Luring involves enticing the dog to follow a piece of food in order to move him into the desired position. As soon as he is in the desired position, mark and reward.

Capturing involves waiting until the dog happens to perform the desired action, then marking and rewarding at the right time so that the dog will try it again.

Guiding involves physically guiding the dog into the position you want. Sometimes you may be luring and add in a bit of gentle physical guidance to help if the dog is really stuck. Some dogs hate being guided and will struggle. For others, it just gives that bit extra help that makes the light bulb in their brain turn on and “get it.”

In this book we’ll mostly use lure, mark and reward techniques. Capturing is handy to know for teaching tricks or any action that the dog can’t be lured into. Capturing is great fun but it generally does take more time to teach a skill this way. Luring helps dogs to think for themselves to figure out what it is that you want. You might add in some gentle physical guidance if the dog is really struggling but don’t rush into it.

WHAT IS A REWARD?

When choosing a reward, remember that it must be rewarding to the dog. Food treats are easy and convenient, especially liver treats. But there are lots of dogs that aren’t that keen on them. The dog may take the treat and eat it but you have to ask – is he really *motivated to work* for this reward? In other words, you have to choose a reward based on what the dog likes, not just what you like, or is easy for you.

The more boring the task, the higher value the reward should be. For example, while practicing obedience skills repetitively, you might use a higher value treat to keep the dog motivated. But when training a complex skill you may need to use a treat of less value so that the dog doesn't become over excited and lose concentration.

Some dogs just aren't that food motivated, so you may need to use other kinds of reward. It can be hard to find what motivates some dogs; it's a case of trial and error. Be imaginative and persistent and eventually you will find something that your dog loves enough to work for. This may be a toy, a game of tug, a piece of rag, a ball, or just affection and praise. Once you choose a reward, your dog should not receive that reward for free, but should work for it at all times. So if you choose a toy reward, the dog only gets to play with that toy when you are playing or training with it. It wouldn't be left out in the yard or house.

ON FOOD

Don't leave your dog's meals out for them to graze on. This can lead to fussy eating habits and obesity. In regards to training, having food out all the time decreases its value to the dog. The dog won't be as motivated to work for food as it will likely be full and won't see the point in working for something that is available all the time for free. It is sensible to count training treats as part of your dog's daily food intake to prevent over feeding.

If you're dog will work for its dog biscuits you can even have every piece of food earned through training rather than eaten out of a bowl. This of course depends how much training you are doing and how much your dog eats per day.

THE JACKPOT

A jackpot is a super reward for an extra impressive effort or performance. Your dog may love food but goes crazy for the ball. So you could use the food as your reward and the ball play as your jackpot. The jackpot should be a totally unexpected and brilliant surprise to the dog.

Another way to jackpot is to use the same treat, but in multiples. Research has shown that a dog values many small pieces of food more highly than one big handful. So when you jackpot with food, give ten or so small pieces one after the other in quick succession. Each one would follow the marker, so it would be: yes, treat, yes, treat, yes, treat all in a row, not all in one go.

FADING THE LURE

To prevent your dog from becoming reliant on your hand movements, you need to fade out the luring hand once your dog understands what is expected from him. To do this, lure the dog with a closed empty hand. Then reward from the opposite hand in which you will have the hidden treat.

As long as your dog is responding well to this, you can then try luring with an empty open hand. Again, reward with the opposite hand. The next step is to create more distance, little by little, between your hand and the dog's nose. You will end up with a hand signal, rather than a lure.

PHASING OUT THE REWARD

The reward should be phased out as soon as possible so that the dog doesn't become reliant on the treat and only work when you have food.

Treats should be phased out as soon as your dog understands the command. You mustn't cut them all out straight away though. Like all training, you need to take it gradually. Once your dog is performing the skill reliably, start to skip every 10th reward, then every 9th reward, every 8th and so on. Once you are at the stage where you are only rewarding every few times, simply reward randomly to keep motivation up and reward for the best efforts and / or improvements.

IS IT BRIBERY?

Luring helps your dog to learn what you are trying to teach him in the teaching phase only. A bribe would involve offering the treat in exchange for a *known* command. The dog doesn't know the command in this early learning stage so the treat is not a bribe.

You do however need to phase out the treats as soon as your dog knows the command. This is when the treats become a reward only, no longer a lure. A reward should involve an element of surprise and so it is not held up for the dog to see before performing the command. It comes out only *after* the dog has succeeded.

If you need to *show* the dog the treat before he will obey a known command, then you are bribing your dog.

WHEN TO ADD THE COMMAND / CUE

If you add the command before your dog knows the skill, your dog has nothing to connect the command to, and so it is another meaningless human sound. This can actually make the word harder to teach because your dog has learnt that it means nothing. Only introduce the command when your dog is reliably performing the behavior.

If you aren't willing to place \$500 on the likelihood that the dog will perform the command when you say the word, then you aren't ready to say it.

When you are training your dog to respond to a verbal command without the hand signal, say the verbal command a split second *before* giving the hand signal and then phase out the hand signal gradually.

THE RELEASE WORD

The release word tells your dog when it is okay to break the last commanded position. Without a release word, the dog can't be expected to know when it's alright to get up – after 3 seconds? 10 seconds? 5 minutes? If you teach the dog that it holds position until the release word, you won't have to teach the additional command 'stay,' as the dog will know to stay until released. For example, you tell your dog to sit. He sits. He knows that he has to stay sitting until he is released. You say the release word and he is free to get up again.

The word you use to release your dog should be relatively short, easy to say, and preferably not something you say a lot in everyday conversation, like 'okay.' Some words used as release words are 'release,' 'free,' or 'play!' You can pick anything you like for your release word and you should have fun saying it. The release is a reward in itself because it means the dog has done a good job and is now free to go. Once the dog learns what his release word means, he'll be excited to hear it and it will act as a powerful reward, all the more so if you are excited when you say it. Think of the release as a little celebration with your dog on a job well done!

In time, your dog will learn not to get up out of a position until he is either given another command or his release word.

THE STAGES OF LEARNING

Teaching Stage

This is the first stage of training a new skill. The dog has no idea what you want. Because the dog doesn't know what you want, there is no punishment in this phase, only reward and encouragement. The dog doesn't understand the command yet, or that it can get a reward if it does a certain thing. To help the dog, all sessions are short and all efforts towards the end goal are rewarded. Repeat the steps until the dog understands and knows what you want him to do.

Training Stage

The dog now has an idea of what you want. In this phase, you keep practicing and you introduce the cue. You gradually build up duration. The dog learns what he is doing that is getting him the reward. The dog understands what the command means. The dog now understands what the release word means. The dog also learns that punishment occurs when he breaks the rules. However, you should still be setting the dog up to succeed so that mistakes are as rare as possible. Expectations should not be too high, for example – the sit is rewarded but it isn't yet in the position you are after, such as straight by your left side. The lure is faded out in this stage and rewards are given less often. Mild distractions are introduced.

Proofing Stage

The dog knows what to do and is only rewarded for the best efforts. Gradually, more intense distractions are introduced. Skills are fine-tuned. You now can work on getting that sit straighter and faster. Training is taken to different environments and proofed in a variety of places and situations with a variety of distractions. You can go back to the training stage if the dog is struggling.

EXTINCTION BURSTS

When ignoring a behavior or withholding a reward, an extinction burst may occur. This is a burst of intense effort by the dog, trying his hardest to get the desired result he has achieved before. For example, your dog whines at the door and has been let in for whining in the past. To teach the dog to stop whining, you decide to ignore all whining and never let him in when he whines. Your dog begins to whine less and you are relieved that the training is working. But then your dog gets worse than ever before and whines louder and longer than in the beginning!

This is where many people give up and let the dog in. They think their training has failed at this point. But this is the extinction burst – the dog's last attempt to get what he wants by trying harder than ever before. If you are strong and continue to ignore his behavior through this burst, your training will be successful and your dog will give up. If you ignore the dog until the burst and then give in, you have just taught the dog that to get his way, he has to try harder – whine louder and longer! It will then be harder to train him out of it in the future.

TIMING OF PUNISHMENT AND REWARD

Research has shown that there is a 3 second window for the dog to make the connection between the behavior and the reward or punishment that is given afterwards. After these 3 seconds, the connection fades and by 5 to 10 seconds it is lost altogether. This means that rewards or punishments need to be given within 3 seconds.

It also means that you need to wait at least 5 to 10 seconds after the dog stops doing the unwanted behavior before giving attention or reward again.

Remember that punishment does not necessarily mean that you physically touch the dog. Harsh methods are not necessary. Please be sure to read the definition of punishment in the section ‘How Dogs Learn.’


Latent punishment – This is punishment given after the fact. There is no point in giving punishment more than 3 seconds after the unwanted behavior. Latent punishment will only confuse your dog.

TRAINING POINTS TO REMEMBER

Expect less from a puppy than from an adult dog. Puppies have very short attention spans and get distracted easily. They also get tired quickly.

- 🐾 Use a marker word that is short and sharp and sounds the same every time. Examples are “yes!” or “good!” Alternatively use a clicker as a marker as it is short and sharp and sounds the same every time to your dog.
- 🐾 Use a release word such as “free” to release your dog from any commanded position. This will build the dog’s obedience in holding a position until released.
- 🐾 Use rewards that your dog really likes. This can be food rewards or a toy. Keep food rewards small so that they are eaten quickly and easily and the dog isn’t distracted by chewing.
- 🐾 Start teaching any new exercise in an environment in which the dog is comfortable and has low distractions (such as the living room). Your dog will perform best where he learns the behaviour. Therefore once he has mastered the skill in the first environment, gradually practice the skill in other environments with more distractions. This will help your dog to generalise the skill to many different environments and perform even with distractions present.
- 🐾 The dog’s actions should always tell you what to do. Only progress when the dog has mastered the first element of training. Never push a dog to do something it is not ready for or doesn’t understand. If your dog seems confused or frustrated, go back to the stage you were last having success.
- 🐾 Dogs pick up visual cues. To keep rewards unpredictable, present them from different places. Sometimes wear your treat pouch

behind your back; other times use your pocket instead. Other times pick them up from a bowl on the bench top. If you always have your treat pouch on when you train (or any other visual cue, such as shoes), your dog may learn only to work at those times.

 Train for short sessions – 5 to 10 minutes is plenty for an adult dog. If you feel like you are on a roll and your dog is doing great, that's the time to stop while you are ahead and can finish on a high note. Don't go for just one more! A few short sessions a day will have more success than one long session. Give your dog breaks in between so that he has time to “soak it in.”

OBEDIENCE SKILLS

There are many different training styles and methods for teaching obedience skills. While not all of them can be covered in this book, remember how dogs learn as discussed at the beginning of the book and apply this to your training. The training instructions included in this book will use the luring method, and a marker and treat will be used to reward the dog at the right time.

TEACHING FOCUS

Your dog can't learn anything if he isn't paying attention to you. You can teach your dog a cue that means 'focus on me'. Common words used for this cue are 'watch,' 'focus,' and 'look.'

Method



Have your dog in front of you, facing you. Leave the leash on the ground and stand on the end of it so your dog can't run off but your hands are free.



Hold a treat in each hand and show your dog that you have them



Raise your hands out the side, standing tall like a tree, treat still in each hand



Now wait until your dog stops staring at the treats and looks towards you. As soon as he looks slightly in your direction, mark and reward him by giving him one of the treats. If he has been staring at one treat more than the other, give him the one he has been staring at the least.

- 🐾 Gradually increase your expectations by waiting for more eye contact and then longer eye contact.
- 🐾 When your dog has figured out to look at you to get the treat, add the cue – “look,” or “watch.”
- 🐾 Gradually increase distractions in the environment while you practise this exercise.

EXTRA EXERCISE:

While walking your dog, “yes,” and treat every time he happens to look at your face and make eye contact. Do this without asking for focus or prompting the dog. Just mark and treat when he offers focus. As your dog learns to offer focus, gradually require longer focus or focus among distractions to trigger a reward.

THE SIT

Practical Uses

- 🐾 Teach your dog to sit to say please by sitting politely for things he wants (food or privileges such as going through the doorway).
- 🐾 Teach your dog to sit as an alternative to problem behaviours such as jumping up or bolting through doorways.
- 🐾 Teaching sit helps create a well-mannered dog that is acceptable to society.

Method

- 🐾 Hold a piece of food between your fingers and hold it right in front of your dog’s nose

- 🐾 Gradually move the treat backwards over the top of the dog's head. He should follow the food and rock backwards.
- 🐾 DO NOT say the command "Sit" at this stage. Simply allow the dog to follow your hand movement
- 🐾 As soon as his rear hits the ground, mark it with a "yes!" (Or click if using a clicker as a marker) IMMEDIATELY and reward with the treat
- 🐾 Release your dog with your release word "Free!" and encourage him to move out of position
- 🐾 After your dog has moved around freely for a while, repeat the steps above until he is responding to your hand movement and sitting reliably.
- 🐾 Use the hand movement without the treat and reward with a treat from your other hand once he sits.
- 🐾 Once your dog is sitting reliably to your hand signal (at least 8 out of every 10 times!) introduce the command "Sit" with the hand signal. This will teach your dog what the word "Sit" means.
- 🐾 Fade the lure and phase out the treat
- 🐾 Now you can work on gradually increasing the duration of the sit before you release your dog. Make sure your dog is looking at you before you release him. Remember to give surprise rewards from time to time to keep the dog motivated and jackpot for extra special performances

Trouble Shooting

- 🐾 **Your dog jumps up to get the treat** – You may be holding the treat too high. Hold it close to your dog's nose, like a magnet.
- 🐾 **Your dog moves forward towards you** – You may not be holding the treat close enough to his nose. Remember to move the treat back over your dog's head.

- 🐾 **Your dog is over-excited by the treat and is trying to grab it from your hand** – Try using a more boring treat. If he is jumping up at your hands, withdraw the treat and ignore him until he settles back down
- 🐾 **Your dog is backing up instead of sitting** – Try using a wall or kerb as a barrier behind your dog, so that he can't move backwards.
- 🐾 **Your dog is distracted and/or not interested in the treat** – Make sure you start training in a quiet environment without any major distractions. Train before mealtimes when your dog is hungry to encourage him to work for the treats. If your dog isn't motivated by the treat, try using a different treat that he finds more appealing. You could also use a toy if he finds that more interesting.

THE DROP

Practical Uses

- 🐾 It's more comfortable for your dog to stay in a drop position for longer periods of time
- 🐾 It's more difficult for your dog to get up from a drop than from a sit
- 🐾 You can use 'drop' as a substitute behaviour to stop unwanted behaviours such as jumping up
- 🐾 The drop is a submissive position for the dog

Method (when teaching from a stand)

- 🐾 It's a good idea to teach the drop from a stand rather than a sit, as this will help the dog to see it as a separate exercise and not to get

caught in a pattern of sit before drop, which can make the drop reliant on the sit.

- 🐾 Hold a piece of food (or a toy) to your dog's nose. Move the treat down towards the ground and then along the ground towards the dog in an 'L' shape (*When luring from the sit position, move the treat down and then away from the dog instead of towards the dog*).
- 🐾 Your dog should follow the treat and his body drop to the ground.
- 🐾 As soon as his elbows hit the ground mark (say "Yes!" or click) and reward. Then release your dog with his release word "Free!"
- 🐾 Allow him to move around and repeat the steps above until he is reliably responding to your hand signal (DO NOT introduce the verbal command "drop" until your dog is CONSISTENTLY responding to the hand signal)
- 🐾 Try using the hand signal without the treat. This is usually a flat palm slowly moving downwards from your waist (start closer to the dog and gradually work your way further away). Use the treat as a reward rather than as a lure
- 🐾 When your dog is **consistently** responding to the hand signal, you are ready to introduce the word "down" or "drop" as the verbal command.

Trouble Shooting

- 🐾 **Your dog keeps getting up to get the treat** – You may be holding the treat too high. Think of the treat as a magnet to your dog's nose.

Other methods to try are:

- Slowly move the treat to the ground and then back towards the dog in a reverse 'L' movement (in towards the dog) to tip him off balance.

- Sit with your legs out in front of you and lure your dog under your legs with a treat
- Lure your dog underneath the rungs of a sturdy chair.
- 🐾 **Your dog gets over excited by the food and tries to dislodge it from your hand** – You could try a more boring treat. Every time your dog lunges at your hand, draw your hand away and ignore your dog until he settles again
- 🐾 **Your dog is distracted and not interested in the treat** – Always start training new exercises in a quiet environment without distractions. You could try a more interesting treat or something else your dog finds more rewarding, such as a toy.

THE STAND

Why teach my dog to stand?

Standing on command is a useful skill. Your dog may need to stand for examination at the vet, or stand still while you bath or groom him.

Method

- 🐾 Use a treat as a lure and hold it to your dog's nose.
- 🐾 Move the lure forward slowly until your dog stands up
- 🐾 Mark the stand with a “yes!” or click and reward
- 🐾 Release your dog with his release word and give lots of praise
- 🐾 Allow your dog to move around for a while and then repeat the steps above. DO NOT give the command “Stand” until your dog is CONSISTENTLY responding to the hand signal

- 🐾 Practice with a hand signal without a food treat in your hand. This is usually a palm facing out toward the direction you would like your dog to face when standing. Once your dog is in position, mark and reward
- 🐾 When your dog is responding consistently to the hand signal (at least 8 out of 10 times), start using the verbal command to “stand.” Give the verbal command immediately before giving the hand signal to stand. Mark and reward, then release your dog.
- 🐾 Now you can work on building duration and distance!

THE RECALL

The recall, or coming when called, is one of the most important things you can teach your dog. It may save his life!

The reward you use to train the recall should be your dog’s **ULTIMATE** reward (think sausages, steak, roast chicken, or a toy the dog goes crazy for). He should only get this special treat when he comes to you and never for free.

Method

- 🐾 Start off with your dog on a standard length leash. Wait until your dog is sniffing around not paying attention to you
- 🐾 Call your dog’s name in a friendly voice. When he looks up, encourage him with praise – “Good boy!”
- 🐾 When your dog starts to move towards you, say, “Come!” Only say it **ONCE**
- 🐾 Run backwards as you gather up the lead and your dog runs towards you

- 🐾 When you have gathered up the lead and your dog has reached you, mark (“Yes!” or click) and reward with treats and lots of praise
- 🐾 Release your dog and practice with the steps above
- 🐾 **NEVER** punish your dog when he has come to you. You want your dog to learn that coming to you is **ALWAYS** a good experience.
- 🐾 When your dog has mastered the distance of the standard leash (remember you are also covering ground by moving backwards), you can progress to a long line. However, don’t start with the dog right at the end of the long line. Take gradual steps and only progress when your dog has mastered the step. For example, if you have practised with a leash that is 1.5 metres long, start training with the long line at 2 meters. Then progress to 2.5 meters, then 3 meters and so on.
- 🐾 If you move forward and your dog has trouble, take a step back to where your dog last had success.
- 🐾 Practise the recall with the lead and then with the long line in a variety of different environments and with a variety of low-level distractions. Again, work up gradually to more challenging and distracting environments.

THE STAY

If you use a release command to release your dog from any commanded position, then there is no need to teach an additional command to stay. Simply build on duration and distance with commanded positions such as sit, stand and down. We will use the sit as an example. So we are teaching a sit-stay.

Method

- 🐾 Command your dog into the sit position at your left hand side.
- 🐾 Move your right foot apart from your left foot
- 🐾 If your dog holds position, mark and reward, then release your dog.
- 🐾 Practise these steps until your dog is consistently holding the stay despite your movement. Don't be tempted to jump ahead. Practise the small movement at least ten times with success before moving on.
- 🐾 The next step is to move your right foot apart from your left foot again and this time lean to the right with your left foot remaining firmly placed on the ground.
- 🐾 Return to position and if your dog has held his sit, mark and reward. Release you dog. If your dog has broken position, place him back in position and go back to where he was last successful.
- 🐾 Repeat this at least 10 times before moving on.
- 🐾 Repeat the process above with the following movements away from your dog. Be sure your dog is successful 10 times in a row before proceeding to the next step:
 - Move your right foot away from your left foot and slide you left foot to join with your right foot (x10)
 - Take two steps to the right, away from your dog (x10)
 - Take three steps, four steps and so on until you can take several steps to the right without your dog breaking the sit. (x10)
- 🐾 The next stage is to take steps forward and backwards. Repeat the above movements but stepping forward instead of to the right. This will be hard for your dog as he is used to following you when you step forward.

- 🐾 If your dog breaks position at any stage, simply place him back into position and take a step back to where you were last successful.
- 🐾 Practise the above steps for movements to the front, back and sides until you can eventually walk around your dog without him breaking position.
- 🐾 Now gradually build on duration and distance, distractions and environments!

LOOSE LEASH WALKING

Why dogs pull

Dogs have an opposition reflex, which means that when pressure is put on them, they will resist it. So when pressure is put on their neck when you are trying to pull them back on a walk, this will only encourage them to pull more as they will naturally want to pull against the pressure.

Equipment

There are many training tools that you can use to help train your dog not to pull. Many of these tools are band-aid solutions. They curb the dog's pulling but they are not actually teaching the dog what is required – a loose leash at all times. Many owners just want a quick fix and that's fine too.

This advice is written with a flat collar or martingale collar in mind. Some training tools are suitable for some dogs and not for others. Some tools that are very popular can cause serious damage to your dog if you do not know how to use them properly. And some tools, such as harnesses, can encourage your dog to pull even more.

For more information about the different training tools available, consult your trainer.

What to do

If your dog pulls, this method can help you to teach him to walk on a loose lead. If your dog is a chronic puller and has been pulling for a long time, extra help may be needed and you should consult your trainer.

The trick is to start from the very beginning – in your house where you put the lead on your dog. Your dog should patiently sit and calmly wait for you to clip the lead on. If your dog is used to walks, and jumps,

whines, barks or displays any other over excitement when you are trying to clip the lead on, take the lead off and put it back away. Continue this as many times as necessary until your dog sits calmly and waits for the lead to be put on.

Begin walking around your house in a quiet area such as the living room. If your dog charges ahead of you stop, change direction and start again. When your dog walks nicely at your side, mark the behavior with “yes,” “good dog,” or a clicker, and give a high value food reward.

When your dog has this mastered in a few areas of the house, start the process over again in the back yard. Once mastered there, progress to the front door. Be patient and do not move on to the next step until your dog is making no mistakes.

THE FRONT DOOR

It’s time to really test your patience. With your dog on lead, open the front door and prepare to walk through with your dog. EVERY TIME your dog pulls ahead out the door in front of you, stop and bring your dog back inside and shut the door. Repeat this as many times as necessary until your dog calmly walks through the door without pulling ahead. Even if it takes one hundred times.

THE WALK. Now that you are outside, repeat the same method you used inside. Start in an environment with less distractions and only move on to a more distracting environment when your dog has been successful. The backyard and then the front yard are usually the next step before moving onto the street and then the park. Take your time and be patient. Remember to give your dog lots of praise when he is by your side. If you are patient and persistent with this method, you will soon be walking a well-mannered dog by your side. Like all training, it takes patience, some time, dedication and consistency.

For Puppies

If you have a puppy that is just learning to walk on a lead, you have the advantage of a blank canvas, i.e. a puppy that is just learning with no

ingrained bad habits! Make the most of this and teach your puppy at a young age what is required. Training the right way now is a lot easier than fixing a bad habit later.

The method is simple. Each time your puppy is at your side, give her lots of praise and you can also use treats if your puppy is food motivated. Each time your puppy pulls ahead and makes the lead tense, simply stop. Wait or encourage your puppy back to your side. Wait a little while, give some praise and then continue walking, as long as the lead is loose. Your puppy will learn that as long as the lead is tight, she gets nowhere. When the lead is loose she gets to move forward. Never walk forward while the puppy is pulling and there is any tension on the leash.

Sounds simple and easy, doesn't it? That's because it is. All you need is a little patience and consistency. If you are consistent with this from a young age, your pup will learn what is required in no time.

If you have more than one dog, always train dogs separately until they have mastered the skill being taught. Then put the two together and start from the beginning with the both of them.

Only use a flat collar, martingale collar or harness on any puppy less than 6 months of age.

THE HEEL

Heeling is a lot more refined than simply walking on a loose leash. Heeling means the dog walks at the left side, looking up at the trainer, with full focus. Heeling is difficult for a dog to perform for a long period of time. It is more of a formal skill and is a great exercise to practice getting your dog to focus on you. Teaching the heel may help with teaching your dog to walk on a loose leash but is not the same skill. Teaching the heel thoroughly involves many small steps over a long period of time. Start in a quiet distraction free environment, as you do when teaching any new exercise.



Mark and reward your dog often, whenever he is in the heel position. You can use a lure to make sure he is in the right spot.



Sometimes you may need to use a barrier, such as a wall, to train the heel so that your dog is straight beside you.



Lure, mark and reward for small improvements. Lure the dog to your side and mark and reward for one step forward in position, then two steps, three, and so on.



Once the dog has the hang of this, hold your treat in a closed hand at your side and have the dog focus on you. Whenever the dog gives you focus, mark and reward.



The next step is to move forward with focus. Have your dog focused on you and take a step forward. Mark and reward your dog for maintaining focus.



Again, very gradually increase duration and distance. Be patient and remember this is hard for the dog.



Once your dog has mastered this in a distraction free environment, start to gradually add low

distractions. Build these up gradually as well before moving on to more challenging environments.



Make sure your dog has fully mastered each level before moving on to a harder level.

USING A LONG LINE

A long line is usually 5 to 7 meters long and is used to proof skills from a distance and to train the recall. The next step after long line training is off leash training! The long line should be strong but light. Ideally your dog will forget that he is on leash but will have the long line on for safety. Your dog should know the skill reliably on a standard leash before moving on to a long line.

Don't get tangled up in the line, just let it fall and trail behind you. Simply hold it at the length you are working from. When you progress from a standard leash to a long line, don't jump straight to the longest length. Start from a length that is just a bit longer than your standard leash and work your way up.

EVERYDAY LIFE SKILLS

ANTHROPOMORPHISM – HUMANISING DOGS

This means giving human qualities to something that is not human, in this case the dog. For a classic example look at Disney movies that make cartoons of dogs that walk on two legs, wear clothes and talk. They are humanizing them. Maybe this influence is why so many people humanize dogs today.

It's only natural to love our dogs and they *are* family members. There is nothing wrong with loving your dog as part of the family. But they are still dogs, not human children. They are a different species and we have to keep this in mind for their benefit. Believing that dogs are guilty is a classic example of anthropomorphizing because it is assigning a human quality to a dog.

DOGS DON'T FEEL GUILTY

Many owners believe their dogs know when they have done something wrong because they look so guilty. The owner might come home and see that the dog has destroyed something and then see the dog crouching low, looking like he is so guilty over what he has done! These behaviors are appeasement behaviors. The dog can sense that the owner is angry before a word is spoken and begins to show appeasing behaviors to avoid conflict. They have no idea they have done something wrong, they just know the owner is mad.

Some owners say they know the dog has done something wrong before they even see what it is. They see the dog looking guilty and that's the first sign that the dog has done something wrong. This occurs when the

dog has learnt that certain things present match up with an angry owner. So while they don't know that shredding the couch is wrong, they do know that every time the couch stuffing is on the floor, the owners arrive home in a bad mood and punish the dog. Don't forget, the dog has amazing senses and reads our body language better than we do, so they know well before you speak that you are angry.

Remember, your dog can't make the connection between what he has done wrong and the punishment after 3 seconds have passed. But they can see patterns from visual cues in the environment that may always mean that they are punished. Just remember they have no idea why, so it is not fair to punish your dog in these circumstances.

NOTHING IN LIFE IS FREE

NILIF stands for "Nothing in Life is Free." This is the approach we recommend to all dog owners and when followed, it has many benefits. Your dog receives many good things from you such as food, shelter, play and affection. By teaching your dog that he must work to receive all things from you, this shows him that you are the leader. It will also keep your dog's mind working throughout the day without having to have a formal training session.

Living with the NILIF program need not be difficult or time consuming. Simply set a small task for your dog before he receives something from you. For example, your dog bounds up to you and demands a pat by nudging you. He is demanding attention and deciding when he should get it! Instead of giving him what he wants when he is demanding it, ignore him until *you decide* you would like to give him some attention, then call him to you and tell him to sit. Once he sits, give him his pats. In no time, your dog will be sitting as soon as he arrives at your side, instead of jumping on you! He has learnt that to get what he wants he must perform the sit first.

Here are some other examples of how to use the NILIF program effectively:



When letting your dog through the door, give the sit command. Your dog must stay in the sit position until released with his release command. This will strengthen your dog's sit, stay and release word!



When feeding your dog, have him perform a few basic obedience commands before you put the bowl down. Have your dog hold a position while the bowl is placed down. Teach your dog an “ok” command that means he can eat. If your dog tries to eat before given his ok command, lift the bowl back up until he holds his position and waits. You will find it won't take long for your dog to learn that it is in his best interest to wait until the bowl is placed down and he is given his “ok” command. (You can choose any word for the ok command, be creative! But make sure everyone in the house uses the same word)



Before being invited onto the furniture, have your dog perform a drop.

Using NILIF does not mean that you have to give less affection to your dog. It simply means that you are in charge of when your dog receives it, not the dog! Use this policy for all things your dog receives from you. Keep in mind that for the program to work effectively, all members of the family must use the same rules with the dog. **Consistency** is the key!

CAN I ALLOW MY DOGS ON THE BED?

Of course you can! If you want to sleep with your dog or have them on the couch then no one has the right to tell you that you shouldn't. Studies have actually shown that it is beneficial for dogs to spend time inside with their 'pack,' even on the couch! The only thing to keep in mind is to make sure that the dog only gets up when invited and also gets off when told. It should always be your choice, not the dogs. This simple rule allows you to enjoy affection and share space with your dog, while making sure your dog respects you as leader.

If your dog shows **any** aggression when told to move, they should not be allowed on the bed or furniture at all and you should consult your trainer as soon as possible.

CRATE TRAINING

What is a crate?

A crate can be made from metal like a cage, plastic like a pet carrier, or made out of strong fabric like a tent for your dog (a soft crate). It is box shaped and comes in different sizes to suit all sizes of dog. Your dog must be able to stand up, turn around and lay down in the crate. Put a pet bed inside the crate for comfort. Also allow room for a water bowl, as your pet must always have access to fresh water.

What is crate training?

Crate training involves teaching the dog that the crate is a safe, comfortable and pleasant place to be. This works because dogs naturally feel safe in their 'den.' You can use crate training to toilet train puppies or adult dogs; to confine a dog that is sick, recovering from surgery or injured and needs rest; or simply as a calm place for your dog to retreat to or for moments when you can't supervise him. If your dog has been

crate trained, he will be calmer when placed in a cage such as at the vets, or when being transported.

Teaching your dog to love his crate

Don't force your dog into the crate, he may be wary of it at first and not want to go inside at all. Until the dog is comfortable in the crate, don't shut the door of the crate with him inside. A great way to teach your dog to love the crate is to feed him in there. Give him his meals in the crate, give him treats and his favorite toys in there as well as a comfy bed to lie on. Soon enough the dog will love being in his crate! Then slowly introduce short periods of being in the crate with the door shut. Leave yummy chew toys and treats in there and start off in the room with him and then gradually spending short and then longer amounts of time away from him while he is in the crate.

Crate training for toilet training

Puppies instinctively do not like to go to the toilet in their den where they eat and sleep. You can use the crate to help time when your puppy will need to go. Bring the puppy out of the crate to play and spend time with him but feed him in the crate and have him sleep in there. Bring your puppy out at regular times to go to the toilet in the spot you want him to learn to go. Bring him out straight after every feed time and after every sleep when he wakes up. If you bring him out to relieve himself at regular times, your puppy will learn to hold it in between, as long as you are not expecting him to hold it for an unreasonable amount of time.

Puppies can't hold on overnight so you will need to get up and let him out a few times a night until he is older. Don't leave him all night as he won't be able to hold it in and will be forced to go to the toilet in his bed. This will set your training back. Be consistent and let him out often until he is older.

SETTLE

Teaching your dog to settle down on cue is very useful. This will come in handy when you have guests, when you are trying to relax, or when in the vet waiting room. Teaching dogs to settle also teaches impulse control – the dog may feel like doing something more exciting but learns to keep calm when necessary.

Many owners pay their dogs a lot of attention when they are excited and over-active – remember attention is a reward so this makes hyperactive behavior more likely to happen more often. The same owners then ignore the dog when he is just lying around quietly. But if you reinforce the calm behavior, it too is more likely to occur in the future, and a calm relaxed dog around the house is what most people want.

Teaching settle should be a gradual relaxed exercise. You can also teach your dog to go to a mat or place where he should automatically settle down when he is there. But for now, let's look at teaching settle as an automatic and calm behavior.



Sit down with your dog on leash at your feet. This is how you would sit if you were at the vets, a café, on the computer and watching TV.




Simply wait for the dog to get bored and lay down – he should have nothing else to do.





When he does lie down, calmly place some treats he really likes between his paws without saying anything. Marking behaviour causes excitement so we aren't going to use a marker to teach this.



If he gets back up, ignore until he lays down again, then reward


 If he remains laying down from the first time, give more treats. Remember to just calmly place the treats there like a random gift from the sky – no attention other than the treats


 When he is doing well, practice going to other seats and areas and getting him to settle there too.


 Like all training, once the dog has mastered this, you can *gradually* work on the exercise in areas with more distractions.


GO TO YOUR MAT / PLACE

While settle should become an automatic behavior when the dog is at your feet, you can adapt it to a command. It's handy for your dog to have his own place such as a mat that he goes to when told and relaxes on. Let's talk about teaching that.

 Have a mat large enough so that the dog can comfortably lie on it.

 Place the mat in the place it will be used. Lure your dog onto the mat – mark and reward

 You will want your dog to go to his mat and lie down as an end result so lure your dog into a down position on the mat, then mark and reward. Practice this a few times while you are standing right next to the mat.

 When your dog knows what you want and is lying on the mat reliably over and over, you can add the command. This is usually 'mat,' or 'bed.' When you say the command and your dog lays on the mat, reward and practise this until he understands what the command word means.



Once you have reached this stage, move just a couple of steps away from the mat with your dog and give the command. If he goes over to mat and lays down on it, reward and praise. If he doesn't you may have moved on too quickly so go back a step



Once your dog masters this from a couple of steps away, gradually increase your distance. Then gradually work around distractions.

If you work gradually and follow these steps you will have a dog that goes to his mat and settles down from anywhere in the house when told. You can also use this as a place to settle down when guests arrive, or while you are eating or watching TV.

LEAVE IT

This is an important skill to teach all dogs. Say you are out on a walk and there is some food on the ground that may be harmful to your dog. With a dog that has been taught the leave it command, you can safely walk right past it.

You can also teach your dog not to take food from strangers this way. Ideally your dog should only take food when hearing an eat command or marker sound. Once your dog learns leave it with food, you can also carry this over to other distractions that you need your dog to ignore. Here's how to teach leave it:



Take a small handful of treats and show them to your dog then close your hand so that he can't get them. Let him sniff, lick and paw all he likes but don't let him get any!



The moment your dog gives up, mark and reward with a treat from your other hand. It may help if the treats you reward him with are of higher value than the treats you are tempting him with.



After a couple of goes, wait on the next round for the dog to look at you instead of your closed hand. We want him to stop thinking about that food. As soon as he looks at you, mark and reward.



When your dog has mastered this, start to practise with your hand of treats open. Don't let him get them, as soon as he tries to go for the treats, close your hand and say, "leave it."



You can now practise with the treats on the ground. Cover them quickly with your hand if the dog tries to go for them. He must *never* get the treats when you are teaching him to leave it!



By now your dog should know what leave it means. If not, you need more practises. If he has mastered the steps above, you can start to make it more difficult. Practise with higher value food items, toys, anything your dog finds distracting and attractive. Reward him with something better for leaving it!



To proof this exercise, practise with other people offering the food. The dog must never take food without being given the OK. At meal times, your dog should always wait for his eat word before being allowed to eat. You can practise leave it by placing his bowl down and telling him to leave it, then giving the eat word when he is allowed to eat.

TARGET TRAINING

Target training is a useful skill to teach your dog if you wish to teach tricks, and is a great way to give your dog mental stimulation. Once your dog has learnt to follow a target, you can then use this to teach him tricks or to teach the heel position by having him follow the target by your side. You can use your hand as a target, or use a target stick, which is a stick with a ball on the end. You can later progress to using post it notes if you want your dog to target a flat surface such as a wall. It's very simple to teach but is great fun and your dog will be using his brain.



Hold out the target in front of you dog. Don't move it, keep it still.



Wait until your dog looks towards the target. Mark and reward.



Mark and reward whenever your dog looks at, sniffs or touches the target. Work through these steps gradually until your dog is consistently touching the target



Move the target into different positions and mark and reward each time your dog touches the target.



When your dog has mastered this, add the cue word, such as "touch."



Now that your dog knows how to target, you can move the target to more challenging positions and use it to train tricks by having your dog follow the target.

MENTAL STIMULATION

All breeds have different exercise requirements and you need to make sure your dog is getting enough exercise by taking him for daily walks, playing and training. You can combine a walk with training to make it more interesting and tiring to the dog. Play is the best way to strengthen

the bond with your dog. And trick training can tire a dog out just by exercising his brain, often making him more tired than a walk!

What about when you're not home? How can you keep your dog occupied? There are hundreds of interactive and puzzle toys for dogs on the market and some creative ways to use them.

One famous puzzle toy is the Kong. These can be filled with treats that the dog has to work out of the rubber. The rubber itself can then be chewed and is pretty tough stuff. You can buy super tough Kongs for super strong chewers if they manage to get through a standard Kong. A popular way to stuff a Kong is to use peanut butter with treats through it. The peanut butter makes it last longer as it is sticky and the dog has to lick through it and work the sticky treats out as well. Another great way to stuff a Kong is to freeze it. I make up chicken or beef stock, plug the end of the Kong with blu-tac and wrap it in a freezer bag, fill it with the stock and then freeze it. I also put some treats in as well which freeze into the stock and add an extra job for the dog to do. Once frozen, simply remove the blu-tac stopper and freezer bag and give it to your dog. This is also great for dogs on hot days to keep them cool.

SAFETY: If you have ever wondered why Kongs have a small hole in the small end, it is so that the dog's tongue can't get stuck inside the Kong by suction. This is painful and can result in tongue amputation. Never use a cheap imitation product that doesn't have this hole. Also, make sure you have selected the appropriate sized Kong for your dog so that they can't get it stuck in their throat and choke on it.

No matter how many toys you have for your dog, rotate them. This means don't leave all the toys out with the dog all the time, they will just get boring like part of the scenery. Mix it up from time to time. Change the toys around every couple of days. Also mix up the different treats that you put inside them.

SOCIALISATION AND CONFIDENCE

Puppies have a critical period of development from 3 to roughly 16 weeks of age. This is the most crucial time for correct socialization. (Please see the Dog Matters blog on the website – www.dogmatters.com.au, for important information on socializing your puppy, including a socialization chart). However, it is not the only time. Socialization needs to continue throughout your dog's life. Being well socialized can help your dog to adapt to various situations quickly and cope well with change and new things. Training obedience commands in different environments and situations is a great way to work on socialization and confidence. Work and reward your dog in front of new people, animals, sights and sounds. Training and being rewarded will encourage your dog to view the new situations happily.

Here is a brief list of some of the things, people and situations your dog should experience positively:

- 🐾 People – adults, teenagers, small children, males and females of all ages
- 🐾 People of all races
- 🐾 People of all shapes and sizes
- 🐾 Disabled people
- 🐾 Wheelchairs, walking sticks etc.
- 🐾 People in uniforms, people with beards, people with odd gaits
- 🐾 People showing affection, having an argument, dancing
- 🐾 Being alone without other people or dogs
- 🐾 Washing machines, dryers, vacuum cleaners, telephones, doorbells
- 🐾 Stairs, slippery floors
- 🐾 Dropped pans, pots, bowls
- 🐾 Lawn mower and whipper snipper
- 🐾 All types of domestic animals – dogs, puppies, cats, livestock, poultry

- 🐾 Handling all over by familiar and unfamiliar people such as vet staff
- 🐾 Skateboards, scooters, skates
- 🐾 Wheelie bins, cars, motorbikes, trucks

Don't force your dog to go near or interact with someone or something if he is not ready. Socialization should always be a pleasant experience. Speak to your trainer if you need assistance.


CALMING SIGNALS – WHAT IS YOUR DOG TRYING TO TELL YOU?

When your dog is stressed, he will show calming signals. If you know what signals to look for, you will be able to tell when your dog is out of his comfort zone and stressing. Calming signals are behaviors that dogs show to avoid conflict, to avoid threats from people or other animals, to calm down nervousness, fear, stress or other unpleasant things, and to make friends with other dogs and people. It's often the dog's way of saying, "I mean no harm to you," or "I feel uncomfortable, please stop." If you notice your dog doing any of the following, it may be a calming signal, depending on the situation:

- 🐾 Turning his head to the side
- 🐾 Diverting his eyes to either side
- 🐾 Turning his back or side to you
- 🐾 Licking his nose
- 🐾 Freezing in position
- 🐾 Walking slowly or using slow movements
- 🐾 Moving towards you in a curve

 Yawning

 Physically going between dogs or people

 Certain tail wags

 Lifting a paw

 Licking faces

COMMON BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

ATTENTION SEEKING

Attention seeking is a common problem presented by dogs of all ages and it presents itself in several different ways. Some are so subtle you may not even realize it, while some are very obvious.

Some attention seeking behaviors include:

- 🐾 Barking
- 🐾 Scratching or whining at the back door
- 🐾 Jumping up
- 🐾 Mouthing
- 🐾 Pawing or nudging for pats
- 🐾 Staring at the person the dog wants attention from
- 🐾 General disobedience

Dogs that love attention may find satisfaction in even the smallest response from their owner. Any attention is good attention – even verbal punishment and eye contact. Some examples that dog's may find rewarding and therefore should be avoided are:

- 🐾 Patting the dog
- 🐾 Physical contact – pushing a dog down that is jumping
- 🐾 Verbal responses not using a suitable tone of voice
- 🐾 Laughing at unwanted behaviour or attention seeking behaviour
- 🐾 Picking the dog up
- 🐾 Letting the dog inside when it is barking or whining
- 🐾 Going outside to discipline the dog
- 🐾 Rushing over to the dog

It may be hard to ignore your dog as the dog's efforts may become more intense. But do not give in. Treatment methods include:

- 🐾 Establishment of good leadership
- 🐾 Using the 'Nothing In Life Is Free' policy consistently – the dog must earn all that it receives
- 🐾 Owner to initiate all contact
- 🐾 Persistence and consistency
- 🐾 Spend quality time with the dog
- 🐾 Do not accidentally reward the dog for its behaviour – e.g. laughing, pushing, eye contact etc.

DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Why is my dog destructive?

Some common causes of destructive behavior are:

- 🐾 Exploration and/or investigation
- 🐾 Teething
- 🐾 Boredom
- 🐾 Lack of exercise
- 🐾 Self-rewarding – the dog enjoys it
- 🐾 Anxiety
- 🐾 Dietary
- 🐾 Separation related behaviour

Treatment

Treatment methods include but are not limited to:

- 🐾 Supervision of puppies and puppy-proof the home
- 🐾 Confinement/restrict access to chewable items
- 🐾 Provide an alternative chew item – toys, bones etc. These must be safe and appropriate for your dog’s size.
- 🐾 If you are going to punish your dog for the behaviour, only do it when you have caught him in the act. *Never* punish your dog after the event.
- 🐾 Distractions – before any chewing begins
- 🐾 Look at whether the diet may need improving
- 🐾 Put something that tastes bad on the objects, such as a taste deterrent spray
- 🐾 Make sure the yard is free of targets

DIGGING

Causes

- 🐾 Digging can be very rewarding for a dog. Some dogs just love to dig! This can make it difficult to stop, as your dog feels rewarded just for doing it.
- 🐾 Terriers or part terriers are more genetically programmed to dig
- 🐾 Dogs can dig because they are bored. They may not be getting enough physical exercise or mental stimulation
- 🐾 Is your dog digging at fences as an attempt to escape?
- 🐾 Freshly dug up dirt is cool and some dogs will lay in it to escape the heat if they don’t have enough shelter
- 🐾 The dog may be burying bones or other food. This could be a sign of over feeding



Occasionally a dog may learn to dig after seeing their owner or another dog dig in the garden.

Treatment



Remove the dog from the environment –place in pen, put inside when not supervised, crate the dog



Restrict access to area – fence off area. This tends to be successful when a dog digs in the same area each time.



Correction when caught in the act – just startling the dog often works



Interrupt behaviour – not generally successful for long standing problems. Great for puppies.



Provide alternative, appropriate place to dig – sand pits are great. Bury toys/treats to encourage use



Fill the hole with water or faeces (faeces must be fresh)



Bury rock or place chicken wire in the hole – feels yuck when the dog's claws hit it



Ensure dog has access to adequate sleeping area

EXCESSIVE BARKING

Why Do Dogs Bark?

There are many reasons dogs bark. Some of the most common reasons are:



Attention Seeking



Excitement

- 🐾 Boredom
- 🐾 Territorial or predatory behaviour
- 🐾 Fear
- 🐾 Separation Related Behaviour
- 🐾 The dog has not received enough socialisation
- 🐾 The dog has been rewarded for barking in the past

Barking can become an ingrained habit because many dogs enjoy it. For this reason it is important to reduce the opportunities for the dog to bark. Meanwhile you can work on alternative behaviors for your dog.

Treatment Options

Like all behavior problems, treatment will depend on the cause of the barking. Most success will be achieved if the cause is addressed appropriately. This may take some time. Meanwhile, we can aim to treat the symptoms. Treatment options for barking may include but are not limited to:

- 🐾 Mask the noises that are causing the dog to bark. Use a radio or TV.
- 🐾 Remove the dog from the environment – keep the dog inside, in the garage at night, fence off an area
- 🐾 Habituation and desensitisation program to get the dog used to whatever is causing it to bark.
- 🐾 Put the barking on cue and a quiet command on cue. This way your dog can learn to bark when told and be quiet when told.
- 🐾 Many dogs that bark in the early evening have not received enough exercise. Increased exercise may help to cure the problem.

Other strategies include addressing attention seeking, providing environmental enrichment, and addressing any leadership issues. The

methods you use to treat the problem will depend on the individual dog and on why the dog is barking.

FEAR OF RIDING IN CARS

Most dogs seem to look forward to car rides. However some dogs may be quite uneasy or fearful when riding in the car.

Some **causes** of a dog being fearful in the car may include:

- 🐾 The dog was not exposed to the car early in puppyhood.
- 🐾 The dog has experienced that the car usually leads to a negative experience i.e. the dog is usually only taken in the car to go to the vet or somewhere else it does not enjoy
- 🐾 The dog has had a bad experience in the car
- 🐾 The dog has been rewarded for showing fear in the car (cuddled, soothed, picked up etc.)

Some **tips** to help your dog to enjoy car rides:

- 🐾 Familiarise the dog gradually with the car. Use lots of praise and rewards for progress towards the car. Reward your dog for a calm response toward the car
- 🐾 Do not reward your dog for fearful responses i.e. don't pick up, pat, cuddle or soothe the dog when it is showing fear. This could teach your dog to display a fear reaction in order to be rewarded.
- 🐾 When a family member arrives home in the car, take the dog to greet them at the car instead of waiting until they come inside. This will teach the dog to associate this pleasant experience with the car

- 🐾 Take your dog on some short trips to somewhere he loves, such as the park or beach. Once your dog realises that he is going somewhere fantastic he will be excited to ride in the car
- 🐾 Crating your dog in the car may help to make him feel more secure. When around the home, make the crate a comforting place for your dog. Good things happen there such as receiving treats, pats, praise, and it's a safe place to relax.

Sometimes ingrained fears may take a lot of time and effort to improve. But do not give up. For serious issues, consult a trainer/behaviorist to assist you.












TOILET TRAINING

Most toilet training issues arise when the original toilet training has not been adequate. A dog is considered to be toilet trained when he has not had any accidents for four weeks.

Treatment

These processes can be used with puppies and adult dogs. You should begin with the end in mind, as dogs do develop preferences for surfaces to eliminate on. Therefore, owners should start training in the place they would like the dog to go to the toilet at in the long term. The below method should see results in two weeks.

- 🐾 Take the puppy/dog to the place where you want him to toilet and praise when he goes
- 🐾 Take the puppy/dog to the same spot each time. Encourage them to walk rather than carry, as this teaches the pathway to the area

-  Take the puppy to the toilet spot after all meals, after all play, as soon as he wakes up and if he hasn't been for a while
-  You can introduce a cue word such as empty, toilet etc.
-  Keep alert and watch for signs that the dog may need to go out
-  Restrict access to areas in the house to prevent accidents and ensure adequate supervision
-  Don't feed just before bed – allow time for digestion and toileting
-  Clean up any mess in the dog's absence to avoid unwanted attention
-  DO NOT use cleaners that contain ammonia as they smell like urine
-  Keep a chart if you are having problems. This helps to recognise patterns and prevent accidents
-  Startle the dog if you catch him in the act. The startle is to distract. It is not the dog's fault so don't punish him.
-  Never punish the dog after the event. Even if you take the dog over to the mess, they do not understand
-  NEVER rub the dog's nose in faeces or urine. This is cruel and decreases your dog's trust in you, creates fearfulness, and can even make the toilet problem worse.

JUMPING UP

Why do dogs jump up?

Jumping up is a common behavior problem. Some causes are:

- 🐾 The dog was encouraged to jump up as a puppy when it was seen as cute rather than a nuisance
- 🐾 The dog is attention seeking. Does your dog display other attention seeking behaviours?
- 🐾 The dog is being rewarded for jumping up – any interaction from you such as yelling, patting, pushing the dog down can be seen as rewarding to the dog.
- 🐾 Excitement – jumping up is a greeting. The dog is so excited to see you that he cannot contain himself. He may then have been rewarded for this in the past.

Treatment methods

- 🐾 Stop any reinforcement for jumping up. Totally ignore the dog. Fold arms and turn away until the dog stops. No verbal response, no eye contact, step out of the way. This is a very effective method when carried out *consistently*.
- 🐾 Teach an incompatible behaviour. Teach the dog a rock solid sit and teach him that he must sit to be greeted. You could also teach him to go to his bed when visitors arrive, sit-stay when people walk past etc.
- 🐾 Punishment – give the dog a correction on the way up - once your dog has his paws on you, he has reached his goal and feels rewarded already.
- 🐾 Put the behaviour on cue – teach the dog a jump up command and an off command.
- 🐾 Improve owner control – work on obedience training and improve sit-stays. Practice NILIF.

Like all training, the key is consistency. If you reward your dog for jumping up even occasionally, it will never stop!






MOUTHING AND BITING

Why do dogs mouth?

Mouthing is displayed by nearly all puppies and is normal exploring type behavior. Puppies play with each other using their mouths and also use their mouths to establish bonds and figure out who is boss. They don't have hands to grab things with so they use their mouths. However, it is not appropriate for puppies to mouth people and if owners do not correct the behavior it can become a more serious problem.

Some owners are encouraging their puppy to mouth without realizing it by giving the puppy physical contact, eye contact, laughing, talking to the dog, or playing tug of war with their hands. Teeth shouldn't be allowed on skin!

Treatment Methods

-  Teach your puppy what is appropriate to chew on – chew toys, bones, raw hides, Kongs. Never people!
-  Distract you puppy with an appropriate chew toy to redirect his mouthing onto this instead of your skin
-  Avoid rewarding the behaviour. Completely ignore the dog, turn away, fold your arms, do not make eye contact or speak to the dog.
-  You could take this a step further by getting up and leaving the room every time the puppy mouths you. This gives the puppy a time out from your attention
-  Give a correction such as a verbal correction – a loud sharp “ah ah” or “no!”



Use calm assertive handling around the puppy. Do not encourage the puppy to nip or mouth by getting him over excited with squealing and fast movements. Teach children not to act like this as it encourages puppies to nip and mouth.



Press down on the puppy's tongue when he mouths until he pulls away.

WHINING AND CRYING

Why Do Dogs Whine?

Whining is common in puppies as a form of communication used in a litter even before the pups' eyes are open. It usually indicates distress, fear or pain.

In the adult dog however, whining is most often a form of attention seeking. We often see this displayed at the back door or when the dog is confined, or simply not receiving the desired amount of attention from the owner. It is reinforced when the dog receives the desired attention.

Treatment Options



Ignore the behaviour until the dog gives up.

(See the section on extinction bursts)



Spend quality time with your dog



Reward your dog for being quiet



Vet check if a physical problem is suspected



Provide environment enrichment for the dog

such as interactive or food dispensing toys



Be careful not to accidentally reward your dog for whining by giving him any attention when he is whining or directly after he stops.

KEEP TRAINING

Dog behavior is far more complex than many people realise. This book has just scratched the surface but should give you the tools you need to train a happy well-mannered dog. There are many issues that cannot be covered in this book. If you have a serious issue, such as separation anxiety or aggression, please consult your trainer or behaviorist as soon as possible; don't put it off.

You now have the skills to continue training and your dog will love you for it! Don't stop training after classes; training is for life!

NOTES

For more information, free tips and tricks sign up at
dogmatters.com.au

